

FOREIGN LANGUAGE SPANISH

Paper 0530/01

Listening

General comments

The overall performance of the candidates was average, with comparatively fewer candidates than in the June series achieving top or very near to top marks.

Comments on specific questions

Primera Parte

Ejercicio 1 Preguntas 1-8

Rubrics generally understood and followed.

Most candidates could cope with all the questions in this exercise. The one that appears to have caused most difficulty was **Question 3**. A number of candidates seemed unfamiliar with the word 'paraguas'.

Ejercicio 2 Preguntas 9-15

Most candidates understood the passage well. **Question 15** [type of music: 'latinoamericana'] was difficult for many. Surprisingly **Question 9**, the length of the trip 'una semana' also caused difficulty.

Segunda Parte

Ejercicio 1 Preguntas 16

The majority of candidates could answer most of the questions. There was no clear pattern of mistakes.

Ejercicio 2 Preguntas 17-24

This exercise was challenging to many. Most could cope with **Question 18**. Of the first part, the one that was most difficult was 20, even when candidates could have given different answers to say he changed 'carrera/vida/trabajo'.

The second part was a good discriminator. Most candidates could cope with **Question 22**. In **Question 23** while many could answer that cars go too fast, only the better candidates could explain that 'no se puede parar cada 100 metros'. In **Question 24**, most candidates could answer that he met 'gente amable' but only the better candidates could explain that these wanted to help him.

Tercera Parte

Ejercicio 1 Preguntas 25-30

This exercise discriminated well: it was well understood by many but challenging even to good candidates. **Question 27** was understood by most, that she had been a language teacher. The most challenging was 28, that she discovered the acting vocation when organising a School play.

Ejercicio 2 Preguntas 31-37

This exercise was a good discriminator too, being the most difficult. Nearly all candidates were able to answer **Question 32**, that previous projects had been too complicated. The most difficult was **Question 33** where only best candidates could explain that the message Alejandro gave to schoolchildren was 'no ensuciar los ríos'. Many candidates were able to answer at least part of **Question 33**. Although there were several options 'organizar a otros voluntarios', 'darles los guantes / una bolsa', 'indicarles el lugar donde limpiar en el río', most candidates went for the first and the last options. **Question 34** was a good discriminator. Only good candidates could explain the qualities attributed to the river 'ser feliz en el amor' and 'curarse de las enfermedades'. **Question 36** required good understanding and only the best candidates were able to explain that people should contact the NGO when they saw 'problemas en el río'.

FOREIGN LANGUAGE SPANISH

Paper 0530/02
Reading and Directed Writing

GENERAL COMMENTS

The vast majority of the candidate entry found this paper to be well within their capabilities.

Very few scored fewer than a third of the marks and many had scores in the top range of 55 – 65.

As usual, those candidates who had been well prepared by their teachers showed familiarity with the requirements of the paper, coupled with a purposeful, constructive approach which helped them make the most of their abilities. Those teachers who have heeded the advice from earlier reports and who digest the comments below can be satisfied that they are doing the best for their candidates.

Teachers should remind candidates that the spaces for answers in the paper are decided after careful consideration. Candidates who fill the spaces and then go on to write much more are generally writing or copying more than they should. They may be in danger of adding information which is harmful, and they are certainly using up their time allocation.

SPECIFIC COMMENTS

SECTION 1

Overall

The first three exercises held no fears for the vast majority of candidates. Exercise 4, however, despite its apparent simplicity, could be problematic for those who tried to write too much.

Specific

Exercise 1 q4 *bañarse* ... was the only vocabulary item to cause a problem.

Exercise 2 This exercise provided some degree of differentiation, each question proving gradually more difficult until q5, where some application of logic was involved.

Exercise 3 was very well done indeed.

Exercise 4 Teachers should advise candidates against losing time by responding to this simple task at great length, or with irrelevant material. It is also worth reminding candidates that their answers should be relevant to the pictures on the paper.

Communication (3 marks)

The most successful candidates - some very able, others not - wrote three separate, short sentences, showing clearly that they were addressing and completing the three tasks. Many who responded enthusiastically and at great length could actually miss a task.

Task (a) The question targeted the idea of location, rather than quality or nature of the new house.

Task (b) The number of rooms did not have to be exactly the number on the plan. However, responses such as: *Mi habitación es el 304* were not credited for Communication.

Task (c) A wide range of possible “likes” were accepted – *palmeras / perro / playa*.
Appropriateness (2 marks): Very few failed to score these marks, which are correct in context.

Overall, a suitable response might be:

Hola, Juan.

- (a) *Mi nueva casa está en la playa.*
- (b) *Tengo seis habitaciones.*
- (c) *Me gusta mi nuevo perro blanco.*
Saludos,
Helena

SECTION 2

Overall

The two exercises in this Section provide an interesting contrast, one in the receptive skill of Reading and the other the productive one of Writing. Disparities in the same candidate's abilities in these different skills were often apparent, with the receptive skill by no means always proving easier.

Specific

Exercise 1 This is fundamentally a task of understanding which requires quite short answers, a single word often being sufficient (See the published Mark Scheme). For this Exercise candidates are therefore advised to communicate their meaning in few words, avoiding the temptation to write or copy at length. They otherwise risk including additional material which might distort or even contradict the sense of the answer. Some examples from this session's papers are given below.

Question 17

The required concepts here were: some months + ago/before the trip. A disturbing number of candidates seem to have understood *¿Cuándo...?* as *¿Dónde...?*

It is good practice to ensure that weaker candidates are thoroughly familiar with the common question words and that they ring or underline them in the paper to help ensure they answer them appropriately.

Question 19

Very few candidates failed to answer this correctly

Question 21

- (a) Verbal errors were generally tolerated here.
- (b) candidates who limited themselves to *esquí* gained the mark. Candidates who tried to write full sentences could distort the meaning: e.g. *los profesores se dejaron subir a las pistas de esquí*

Question 22

Candidates who tried to expand could similarly run into trouble: e.g. *Antes de cenar por lo general estaba cansado*

Question 23

The required concepts were: something/a sport + not/never practised + before (the trip).

Question 24

The required concepts were either: “won a prize” or “(was the student who) had/had worked hard (in class)” or both those ideas together. The concepts: “He was hardworking” and “He was the best/clever (student)” were not accepted.

A significant number gave Juan’s accident as the answer here. It may be that the important word *éxito* is not well known.

Question 24

Le dolió (durante muchos días) was not accepted if it was not accompanied by an explanation of what Juan had injured.

Exercise 2

The topic of “School” was clearly one to which candidates related readily. Most had plenty to describe and opine about their School day, facilities, subjects, clothing, food - and teachers. Unfortunately the topic encouraged many to write to excess, in some cases filling the whole of the page. It should be noted that, even writing as few as seven words per line, candidates who fill all the lines will comfortably write the 100-word maximum for the task. Those who write at length are rarely able to gain any extra credit, often their language becomes repetitious, and they can miss one or two of the set tasks.

Candidates who had been successfully trained showed a systematic approach to this exercise. After a short introduction they tackled each task in turn, often devoting a separate paragraph to each task. In each paragraph they completed the task as required, then added one or two extra pieces of information, often with humour, appropriate idiom and items of personal interest. A brief valediction ended the work. This approach produced work that fulfilled all the criteria.

Many candidates would benefit from practice in responding to tasks which cue responses in the Conditional, such as: *algo que te gustaría cambiar ...*

However, it was good to note how many candidates were able to give full and relevant reasons and/or explanations in response to: *¿Por qué...?*

Communication (5 marks):

- Task (a) 1 mark. Most candidates wrote about times, subjects and gave overall opinions of a typical day.
- Task (b) 1 mark. Though the range of adjectives was usually limited, candidates wrote successfully about their teachers’ good and bad points.
- Task (c) 1 mark. Since *Me gusta* is such a familiar usage, both the idea of what a candidate liked + one reason for liking it were required for the mark.
- Task (d) 1 mark for making it clear what feature of School life they would like to change, + 1 mark for one explanation for wanting change.

Additional relevant details (5 marks):

This information had to be in addition to material already rewarded in the completion of the set Tasks, though it did not have to be supplied in a one-to-one correlation with the Tasks set. Candidates were often able to give two or three extra relevant details about one or more of the tasks, e.g. extra reasons why they appreciated their teachers, or why they liked the School or why they wanted something changed.

Accuracy (5 marks):

As with Communication and Additional Detail, the majority of candidates scored the full five marks here.

SECTION 3

Overall

The challenge in these two exercises is that, after understanding the text, candidates must in addition use their Spanish to show the scope of their comprehension. The commonest ways in which candidates failed to show the precision of their understanding were:

- 1 Copying large areas of text in which they knew or hoped the answer lay – somewhere.
- 2 Copying the correct area of text but including one or two words (such as conjunctions or half of a verb form) that showed they were not in fact in control of the content.
- 3 Making little or no attempt to convert such features as possessive adjectives or the personal endings of verbs. This betrayed the candidate who knew where to copy but could not really understand how the material related to the question.
- 4 Using areas of text which had links to the question but were clearly not the desired answer.

Some examples from this session's papers are given below.

Specific

Exercise 1 The True/False part of this exercise provided the bulk of the marks for many candidates, who often went on to score less well on the correction/explanation part.

Correct answers are shown in the published Mark Scheme.

Question 26

Amongst the rejections were: *visitar sus fábricas* (See 3 above), *hacerse un nombre* (since this was not his original plan) and, commonest: "went to be part of the Konica athletics team".

Question 27

Amongst the rejections were: *a los Kenianos no les interesaba* (See 4 above), where the link to Eric was only by implication.

Question 29

Amongst the rejections were: *Eric es tan aficionado a la comida japonesa* (See 2 above), where the sense is incomplete.

Question 30

The three concepts required here were: imparting knowledge/advice/information + about the marathon + to candidates/in School(s)

Exercise 2 This exercise is intended to be the most testing on the paper and, as is to be expected, weaker candidates found it difficult. Even so, the commonest mark scored was 7 out of 10.

Question 32

(i) and (ii) candidates found a huge variety of answers from various places throughout the text but those in the Mark Scheme were the ones accepted. Amongst the rejections were such as: *a la vez que han transformado* (See 2 above).

Question 33

Required concepts were: variety of/exotic + food/cuisine/restaurants.

Question 34

Some sort of verb was required in response to the verb in the question, the nouns alone (*parques infantiles*) being insufficient (See 3 and 4 above). Answers beginning: *entretanto* generally fell under 2 above.

Question 35

The basic concept was that the place was safe.

Question 36

- (a) The commonest insufficient answers were: *cines/multicines* with no mention of the sorts of films that attract Toni and Sandra.
- (b) Good examples of 4 above and of harmful additional material were: *completarán la noche con el cine, una película y una buena cena.*

Question 37

- (i) and (ii) Answers are interchangeable. If both answers made reference to the rain or both to the temperature, only the first was rewarded. Amongst the rejections the commonest was: *es más tranquilo*

Question 38

This apparently quite easy final question caused problems in two ways. First, there were those who did not understand fully and so wrote: *las tiendas y los multicines*. Second there were those who copied too much and compromised the answer by copying the harmful *nos* and *nuestro* without any attempt at emendation (See 2 and 4 above).

FOREIGN LANGUAGE SPANISH

Paper 0530/03
Speaking

General comments

To be read in conjunction with the Teachers' notes 15 September – 31 October 2009:

Recordings of candidates

The correct sample size for moderation was submitted by almost all Centres and the overall quality of the recordings was very good. There were a few instances where the candidate was not as audible as the Examiner: this can be easily rectified by testing the recording equipment prior to the commencement of the speaking test and positioning softly-spoken candidates closer to the recording equipment. Where CDs are used, the audio should be recorded in such a format that it can be read by Windows Media Player or other standard software. Centres are responsible for ensuring the good quality of recordings (both cassettes and CDs) and it is advisable to check the quality of the recording prior to despatch, especially when the samples are re-recorded. The cassettes or CDs should be clearly labelled with the Centre name and number and the candidate's name and number in the order in which they are recorded. The Examiner should introduce the candidates, and Centres should indicate the end of recording by stating, "End of sample." Examiners are reminded that once a test has started that the cassette/CD should run without interruption and should not be stopped between tests. The working mark sheets were completed correctly as required; however, some arithmetical errors in the candidates' marks were found. Centres should check carefully for arithmetical errors and ensure the accurate transfer of marks onto the MSI form (Internal Assessment Mark Sheet).

Comments on specific questions

Materials for the speaking test should be opened four working days before the assessment starts and should be studied carefully. This allows Examiners ample time to familiarise themselves with their own roles. Examiners should adhere to the Role play tasks as set out and not create additional tasks or change the order of tasks. If the Examiner becomes aware that an element of a task has been omitted, an appropriate prompt may also be given. Careful preparation is particularly crucial where the Examiner has to initiate the dialogue: if a genuine mistake does occur, then the Examiner can quickly and confidently take up the appropriate role, thereby avoiding any unnecessary confusion and anxiety for the candidate. In Test 1 candidates are required to complete one Role play A and one Role play B.

Test 1: Role plays

Role play cards 1, 2 and 3

These tasks were straightforward and candidates performed well.

Task 2

A short response is acceptable.

Role play cards 4, 5 and 6

Candidates coped well with the specified tasks.

Task 3/4

There is no need to add extra information beyond that which is requested in the rubric.

Task 5

Candidates were able to ask for the bill; however, inappropriate or inaccurate verb forms which obscure the meaning were sometimes used.

Role play cards 7, 8 and 9

This Role play was generally completed well.

Task 4

'Agradécele al/a la empleado/a' forms part of the task and if omitted the candidate cannot score full marks for this task.

Task 5

Some responses were ambiguous and it was unclear which birthday the friend was celebrating.

Role plays B

These Role plays were more challenging and candidates responded well to the open ended nature of the tasks set.

Role play cards 1, 4 and 7

The vast majority of candidates managed to communicate all the information.

Task 1/2

Some candidates attempted to communicate more information than required and in doing so occasionally omitted an element of a task and thereby lost marks unnecessarily.

Task 5 /6

Communication was achieved despite the use of inaccurate verb forms.

Role play cards 2, 5 and 8

Most candidates carried out the specific tasks well.

Task 1

All candidates explained that they had a problem however some candidates were unable to state clearly exactly what had happened.

Task 4

Some candidates were asked to spell their names however this was not a requirement of the task.

Task 5

A few candidates failed to offer a reason despite prompting.

Role play cards 3, 6 and 9

Candidates communicated the required information.

Task 1

Some candidates did not introduce themselves hence achieving only partial completion of the task.

Task 3

Candidates struggled to ask an accurate question.

Task 4

Some difficulties arose here when candidates tried to explain their previous work experience in too much detail or in language that led them beyond their linguistic ability.

Test 2 Topic (prepared) Conversation (approximately 5 minutes)

There was an interesting variety of topics chosen. Candidates should show quality of presentation but must not be allowed to resort to pre-learnt material. The Examiner should allow the candidate to speak for up to two minutes uninterrupted and then ask specific questions. Candidates should be given the opportunity to respond to unprepared questions. The Examiner should also be aware of the requirement for candidates to convey past and future time in each Conversation (prepared and unprepared) before being awarded a mark in the Satisfactory band or above for linguistic content (Scale b). They should ask appropriate questions in order to give candidates every opportunity to fulfil this requirement. Candidates perform best where they have a real interest in their chosen topic and where the topic chosen is not limiting in terms of scope for discussion or too challenging in terms of the language and vocabulary required. The Examiner should advise the candidate on the choice of topic.

Test 3 General (unprepared) Conversation (approximately 5 minutes)

The Examiner should make a clear distinction between Test 2 and Test 3 by announcing the move from Topic (prepared) to General (unprepared) Conversation. The candidates have the opportunity to show that they can converse adequately on topics of a more general nature using as wide a range of structures and vocabulary as possible. The Examiner should aim to cover at least two or three of the Defined Content Topics. As in Test 2, too many closed questions which only require minimal responses should be avoided. The onus is on the candidate to engage in conversation, encouraged by the Examiner to perform to the best of his/her ability. This was perhaps the most enjoyable part of the test for many candidates, who were able to engage in a more general conversation about their personal life and experiences.

Assessment

All assessment should follow the principles as explained in the teachers' notes, and examiners should do their best to be consistent in their application of the marking criteria, so that any necessary adjustment at the moderation stage will be as simple as possible. In this session, Candidates were fairly assessed in the vast majority of Centres, but it should be remembered that in Test 1 Role plays Examiners can only award marks for tasks completed by candidates, and that if elements of tasks are not completed a candidate cannot be awarded full marks for a task. In Test 2 Topic (prepared) Conversation and Test 3 General (unprepared) Conversation, it was noticeable in this session that there was a tendency by some Examiners to be overgenerous in their assessment of linguistic content (Scale b) and harsh on the Impression mark.

FOREIGN LANGUAGE SPANISH

Paper 0530/04

Writing

General comments

The standard attained by the majority of candidates was as high as in previous years. On the whole, candidates understood well what each question required and were able to achieve maximum marks for relevant communication. There were some errors due to misunderstanding of the rubric, particularly in **Question 2**. The total marks (out of a maximum of 50) covered the full mark range. Candidates were expected to produce two pieces of extended writing in which they had the opportunity to demonstrate their linguistic competence in terms of complexity, accuracy and range of structures, vocabulary and idiom. The tasks within each question are structured to this end. A system of positive marking is used which rewards both accuracy and ambition. Each exercise is marked out of 25, of which five marks are awarded for relevant communication, fifteen for accuracy of language and five for general impression. No credit is given for anything beyond the 140th word since the rubric stipulates 130-140 words. As usual, some candidates wrote too much, which in most cases resulted in the loss of marks for relevant communication. The first stage of marking for Examiners is to count up to 140th word and cross out the remainder. Any tasks carried out beyond the 140th word do not score marks for relevant communication and nor do they contribute to the mark awarded for Accuracy, and it is important that Centres impress on their candidates that the word limit is real. Candidates should be advised to write 140 words or just under in each of the two questions. It would be prudent to do a preliminary count early on in their task and keep a running total.

Marking for relevant communication in each question

Candidates attempted **Question 1a** and **1b** almost in equal proportions. In **Question 1b** some candidates wrote too much about the problems they had encountered and were unable to complete the final communication task within the word limit. In **Question 2** some candidates appeared to lack practice in writing narratives and struggled to understand some vocabulary items in the rubric. They were often unable to respond satisfactorily to all the communication requirements. The less prescriptive requirements, on the other hand, enabled other candidates to demonstrate their sound grasp of language and appropriate vocabulary.

QUESTION 1

- (a) A ti te interesa ir a estudiar en una universidad latinoamericana. Escribe una carta a la universidad expresando tu interés y pidiendo información

Up to 5 marks in all as follows:

- | | | |
|-----|--|-----|
| (a) | la(s) asignatura(s) que quieres estudiar y por qué | 1+1 |
| (b) | alguna información sobre tu educación hasta ahora | 1 |
| (c) | por qué quieres estudiar ahí | 1 |
| (d) | una pregunta sobre el alojamiento | 1 |

- (b) Acabas de pasar dos semanas en un hotel. Todo fue un desastre. Escribe una carta al hotel para quejarte

Up to 5 marks in all as follows:

- | | | |
|-----|---------------------------|---|
| (a) | los problemas que tuviste | |
| | (i) la habitación | 1 |
| | (ii) la comida | 1 |
| | (iii) los otros turistas | 1 |
| (b) | cómo reaccionaste | 1 |
| (c) | lo que esperas del hotel | 1 |

QUESTION 2

"Estaba en la playa cuando de repente oí un grito de socorro. Miré hacia el mar y vi alguien que se ahogaba..." Continúa la historia.

Up to 5 marks in all as follows:

- | | | |
|-----|-----------------------|-----|
| (a) | lo que hiciste | 1 |
| (b) | cómo acabó todo | 1 |
| (c) | cómo te sientes ahora | 1+1 |

1 mark for 1 further detail relevant to any of (a) or (b) 1

Marking for Accuracy of language in each question

For November 2009 it was agreed that the following words from the rubric listed unchanged would not be awarded marks for language accuracy;

QUESTION 1

- (a) ir a estudiar en una universidad latinoamericana
- (b) pasar dos semanas en un hotel. Todo fue un desastre.

QUESTION 2

Estaba en la playa cuando de repente oí un grito de socorro. Miré hacia el mar y vi alguien que se ahogaba.

Common errors included the following:

- In **Question 1a)** failure to accent verbs where necessary, use and spelling of *conocer*, confusion between *saber/conocer*, *asistir/atender*, first person preterite of verb *sacar*, incorrect use of impersonal verbs such as *gustar* and *encantar*, incorrect gender of *la universidad*, the position of adjectives, adjectival agreements, use of superlatives, failure to accent interrogative words, incorrect and/or inconsistent use of register
- In **Question 1b)** use of wrong register, incorrect use of perfect tense instead of preterite or imperfect, failure to accent verbs where necessary, first person preterite of verb *sacar*, use of 'ser/estar', incorrect gender of *la habitación*, the position of adjectives, adjectival agreements, confusion between *bien* and *bueno*, and failure to accent interrogative words.
- In **Question 2** inconsistent use of tenses, confusion between *bien* and *bueno*, preposition *hacia*, use of personal *a*, first person preterite of verbs such as *andar*, *decir*, *buscar*, *conducir* and *sacar*, correct form and spelling of verbs *oír*, *romper*, *ayudar* and *morir*, confusion between *intentar/probar* and *peligroso/perezoso*, difficulties with describing the weather, use of 'ser/estar'.

As in the past, special attention was paid to verbs. Strong candidates varied tenses and knew how to use them appropriately while weak candidates lapsed into the present. With those of middling ability a common defect was an incorrect use of the perfect or imperfect when only the preterite was appropriate. Candidates writing lists of School subjects or food gave themselves less opportunities to score as highly as those careful to include adjectives and verbs. It was common to omit vital accents in verb endings. All verbs score for accuracy but only if used correctly and accented if necessary. Credit was given to interrogatives (which must be accented), to negatives, to prepositions, to adverbs except for the common '*mu*y', to conjunctions except for the very common '*y*' and '*pero*', to adjectives correctly positioned and agreeing, to pronouns other than subject pronouns and reflexives, to pronouns correctly joined onto a verb e.g. '*escribeme*'; in all these cases a tick was awarded when a unit was correct. Four ticks are worth a mark, up to a maximum of 15 marks.

Marking for general impression in each question

Up to five marks were awarded for the quality of language used; use of idiom, vocabulary, structures and appropriate tenses. In order to score the full five marks the writing had to read fluently, like good Spanish.